

## Maryland Historical Trust Determination of Eligibility Form

<b>Property Name:</b>	<u>Rockville Regional Library</u>	<b>Inventory Number:</b>	<u>M: 26-47</u>
<b>Address:</b>	<u>99 Maryland Avenue</u>	<b>Historic District:</b>	<u>      </u> Yes <u>X</u> No
<b>City:</b>	<u>Rockville</u>	<b>Zip Code:</b>	<u>21201-2308</u>
<b>County:</b>	<u>Montgomery</u>		
<b>USGS Quadrangle(s):</b> _____			
<b>Property Owner:</b>	<u>Maryland Department of General Services</u>	<b>Tax Account ID Number:</b>	<u>00152502</u>
<b>Tax Map Parcel Number(s):</b>	<u>N445</u>	<b>Tax Map Number:</b>	<u>GR32</u>
<b>Project:</b>	<u>Rockville District Court</u>	<b>Agency:</b>	<u>DGS</u>
<b>Agency Prepared By:</b>	<u>Maryland Historical Trust</u>		
<b>Preparer's Name:</b>	<u>Jonathan Sager</u>	<b>Date Prepared:</b>	<u>07/12/2007</u>
<b>Documentation Is Presented In:</b> <u>MIHP# M: 26-47</u>			

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation:				Eligibility Recommended	X	Eligibility Not Recommended						
Criteria:	A	B	C	D	Considerations:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<p>1. The preparer is not a partner in the business.</p> <p>2. The preparer is not a sole proprietor.</p> <p>3. The preparer is not a partner in a partnership.</p> <p>4. The preparer is not a partner in a limited liability partnership.</p> <p>5. The preparer is not a partner in a limited liability company.</p> <p>6. The preparer is not a partner in a partnership that is a disregarded entity.</p> <p>7. The preparer is not a partner in a partnership that is a partnership for federal income tax purposes.</p> <p>8. The preparer is not a partner in a partnership that is a partnership for state income tax purposes.</p> <p>9. The preparer is not a partner in a partnership that is a partnership for local income tax purposes.</p> <p>10. The preparer is not a partner in a partnership that is a partnership for foreign income tax purposes.</p>												

*Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:*

Name of the District/Property: \_\_\_\_\_

Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Eligible: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes Listed: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

Site Visit by MHT Staff: Yes No Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Property and Justification:** *(Please attach map and photo)*

A detailed history and up-to-date description of the Rockville Regional Library is contained in the 2007 MIHP form for the building prepared by Teresa B. Lachin and Eileen S. McGuckian. That form says in part:

"The Rockville Regional Library is a highly representative example of International Style architecture, a preeminent style of mid-20th century commercial, corporate, and institutional design. Designed by Bethesda architect Stanley H. Arthur and completed in 1971, it is the only International Style library in Montgomery County and is an established feature of Rockville's downtown streetscape. Situated harmoniously within the sloping topography of an irregular 1.5-acre site, the library is characterized by clearly defined volumetric massing, a horizontal orientation, a flat roof, austere unornamented surfaces, window bands, and an open interior plan - hallmarks of the International Style. Broad bands of light-colored brick wrap the two-story facades of the T-shaped exterior, alternating with recessed panels of tinted ribbon windows. Cantilevered facades, carried on slender square pilotis, shelter the principal entrance and express the building's sensitive relationship to the scale and contours of the site. A landscaped entry plaza establishes a focal point and softens the transition from street grid to building. Horizontal massing provides a versatile configuration of interior spaces and offers panoramic views of Rockville's eclectic architectural streetscape. With the exception of minor interior changes, the Rockville Regional Library is unaltered, intact, and in good condition."

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility Recommended: <u>    </u>					Eligibility Not Recommended: <u><del>    </del></u>							
Criteria:	A	B	C	D	Considerations:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

**MHT Comments:**

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

Reviewer, National Register Program

7/12/07

Date \_\_\_\_\_

7/12/07

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

**M: 26-47**

**Rockville Regional Library**

**Page 2**

The 2007 MIHP form documents that the Rockville Regional library has potentially-significant associations with trends in local history. The building is also an example of the International Style and an example of the work of the architect Stanley Arthur. Despite this, the 1971 library, is less than 50 years old and does not meet the test for "exceptional importance" required by National Register Criteria Consideration G. The property is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW**

**Eligibility Recommended:** ☐

**Eligibility Not Recommended:** ☐

**Criteria:** ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

**Considerations:** ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

**MHT Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Reviewer, National Register Program**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

M: 26-47

## 1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name) Rockville Regional Library

historic Rockville Regional Library

other 1971 Rockville Library

## 2. Location

street and number 99 Maryland Avenue

not for publication

city, town Rockville, Maryland

vicinity

county Montgomery

## 3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name State of Maryland

street and number 300 West Preston St., #601

telephone

city, town Baltimore

state MD

zip code 21201-2308

## 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records

liber 24372

folio 366

city, town Rockville, Maryland

tax map

tax parcel

tax ID number

## 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☒ Other: Peerless Rockville collection

## 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	1
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	sites
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	objects
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	1
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory

## 7. Description

Inventory No. M: 26-47

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Rockville Regional Library is a highly representative example of International Style architecture, a preeminent style of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century commercial, corporate, and institutional design. Designed by Bethesda architect Stanley H. Arthur and completed in 1971, it is the only International Style library in Montgomery County and is an established feature of Rockville's downtown streetscape. Situated harmoniously within the sloping topography of an irregular 1.5-acre site, the library is characterized by clearly defined volumetric massing, a horizontal orientation, a flat roof, austere unornamented surfaces, window bands, and an open interior plan - hallmarks of the International Style. Broad bands of light-colored brick wrap the two-story facades of the T-shaped exterior, alternating with recessed panels of tinted ribbon windows. Cantilevered facades, carried on slender square pilotis, shelter the principal entrance and express the building's sensitive relationship to the scale and contours of the site. A landscaped entry plaza establishes a focal point and softens the transition from street grid to building. Horizontal massing provides a versatile configuration of interior spaces and offers panoramic views of Rockville's eclectic architectural streetscape. With the exception of minor interior changes, the Rockville Regional Library is unaltered, intact, and in good condition.



The Rockville Regional Library, principal façade opposite Vinson Street and Maryland Avenue. 1971 photo courtesy Mary T. Arthur.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

---

Designed by Bethesda architect Stanley H. Arthur and completed in 1971, the Rockville Regional Library was designed to function as both a County library and the administrative center for the Department of Public Libraries (DPL). Site selection criteria favored convenient public access, proximity to Rockville's downtown area, and availability of public parking for library patrons and DPL employees. A 1.5-acre parcel, located opposite the Montgomery County Office Building at the intersection of Jefferson and Perry Streets (today Maryland Avenue) was within walking distance to a County parking garage, then under construction, behind the County Office Building (COB). The selection of this site prominently situated the new library within the civic environment of County offices and courthouses, underscoring its status as a flagship facility among several new library construction projects of the late 1960s.

The library is a distinctive modernist building and a highly representative example of International Style architecture and site-related design. The International Style originated in Europe during the 1920s and was popularized in America following the 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibition organized by Henry Russell-Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, whose exhibition catalogue defined the movement's aesthetic precepts and design characteristics: an architecture of geometric volume with versatile and open interior spaces encased in skeletal planes, freely organized facades that favored asymmetrical composition, and unadorned surfaces liberated from rigid academic or formulaic patterns of symmetry and fenestration.<sup>(1)</sup> By mid-century, the International Style was prevalent in major urban centers throughout the country and, by mid-century, was making its way to burgeoning suburban areas, like Rockville, whose population growth was fueled by postwar prosperity.

Rockville's postwar population boom, twice the rate of growth County wide, was driven by its proximity to Washington, D.C. and the availability of affordable middle class suburban housing. A sharp and sustained increase in residential construction spurred commercial, office, and retail development, simultaneously creating a demand for institutional services and facilities, such as new public schools and libraries. Common to both private and public sector initiatives was the need for buildings that were versatile, economically constructed, and strategically located. Modernist architecture was ideally suited to the complex requirements and progressive ethos of the postwar suburb. Favored by the availability of affordable building sites and a generation of community architects trained in modern design and technologies, Rockville's architectural character, like that of many communities throughout the metropolitan area, was transformed by modernism into a thriving suburban city.

By the mid-to-late 1960s, new public libraries in Aspen Hill, Chevy Chase, Kensington, Rockville, and Wheaton were under construction or in varying stages of development. The City of Rockville was slated for both a regional library and a Twinbrook branch, then in the planning stages. With the exception of the Colonial-inspired Chevy Chase Library on Connecticut Avenue (1965), new facilities were predominantly modernist in design, the Rockville Library the only project designed in the International Style.

Prior to 1971, Stanley Arthur designed four projects in Rockville, working in a variety of modernist architectural styles and influences, from the Bauhaus-inspired IBM building (1959) to the Pavilion style of the Rockville Unitarian Church (1964). Arthur's sweeping horizontal design for the Rockville Library prevailed over the irregular shape and sloping topography of the site, which both defined the design and, in turn, was defined by it. Making use of the east-west axis, Arthur aligned the full length of the two-story building along Jefferson Street, breaking the horizontal line with a six-foot corner jog and placing a secondary entrance approximately at grade. From Jefferson Street, the library stretches outward



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 2

---

across the slope, terminating approximately fifty feet from Maryland Avenue. The principal entrance, located under a sheltered walkway on the south façade opposite Rockville City Hall, is precisely aligned with the corner of Maryland Avenue and Vinson Street, a view that showcases the library's distinctive International Style profile.

A landscaped entry plaza signals the entrance, providing an architectural focal point and buffering the transition from street grade to building. Plaza landscaping includes mature specimen trees, foundation plantings, perennials, and ground cover. A parking lot with handicapped entry and delivery bays is located within the southwest corner of the T-shaped plan. Cantilevered facades, buttressed by slender square pilotis, hover above the walkways along Vinson Street and Maryland Avenue, the latter providing access to utility and maintenance facilities at grade level.

The library is constructed of a steel framework, brick, and glass. Broad bands of light-colored brick, laid in stretcher bond, wrap the two-story exterior, alternating with panels of recessed tinted windows. A dark brick veneer covers foundation panels along the lower sections of the south and east facades, enhancing the effect of light-colored cantilevered construction hovering above the plaza entryway. A thin brick cornice defines the crisp roofline, emphasizing the rectilinear geometry and horizontality of the design.

The first story housed the public library collections. A lobby area with exhibit cases, children's books, elevator and staircase led into the open stacks, reference collections, and research areas. A network of offices was located behind the main checkout counter. The interior was well illuminated and enhanced by panoramic views of Rockville's historic courthouses, public buildings, and streetscapes. County library headquarters with administrative offices, conference rooms, and book depository were located on the second floor, which was accessible by an entrance ramp from the southwest parking lot.



North façade from Jefferson Street

**Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Inventory of  
Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. M:26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 3

---



**Corner of southeast façade from Maryland**

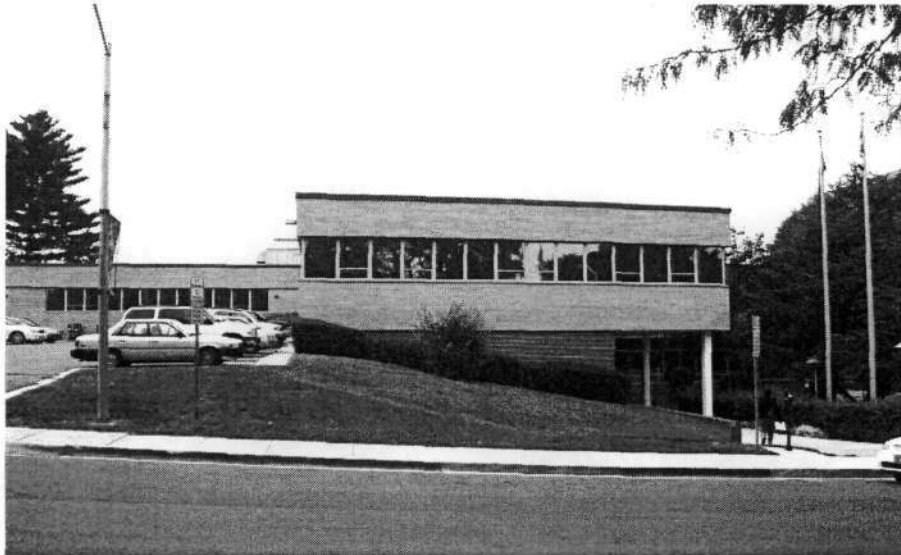
**Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Inventory of  
Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 4

---



**South facade from Vinson Street**



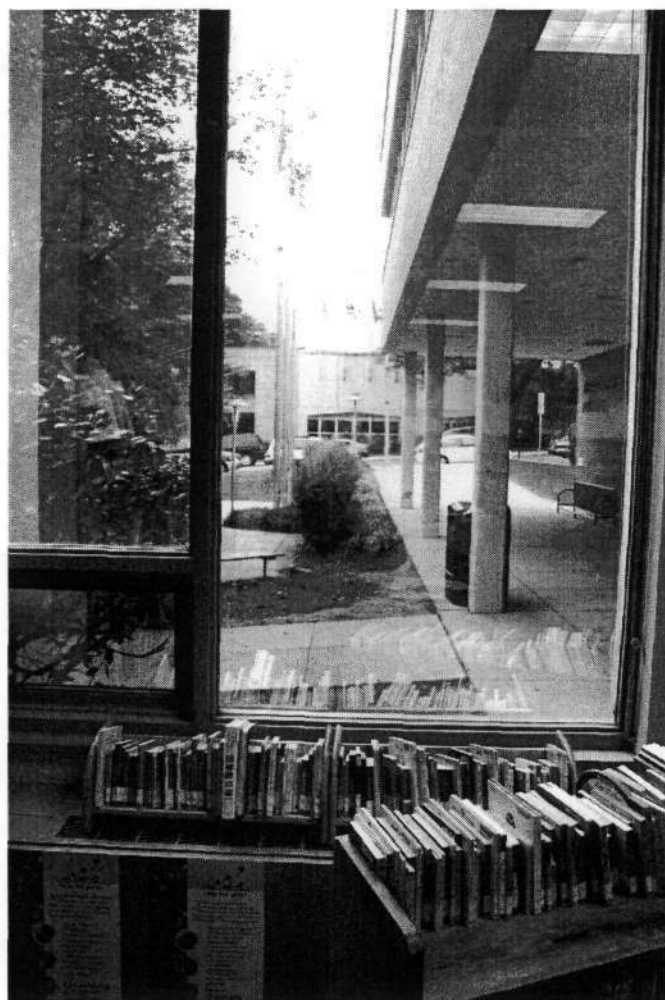
**Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Inventory of  
Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 5

---



**Interior view facing south toward Rockville City Hall**

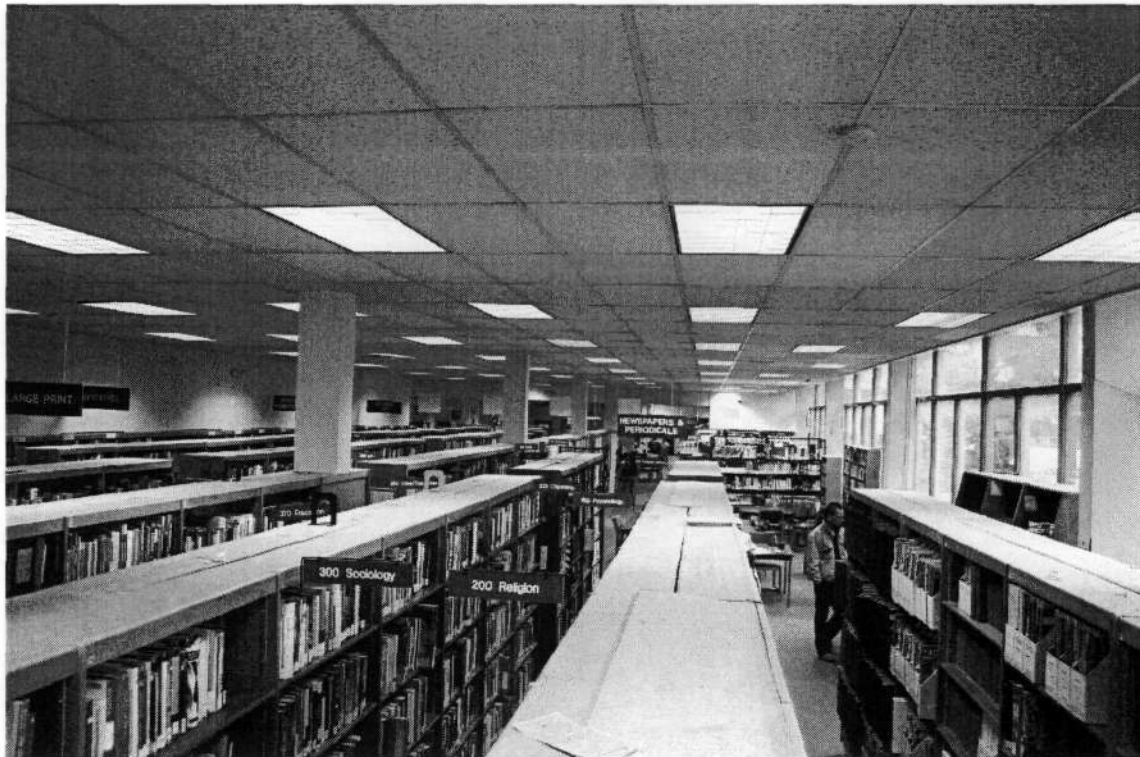
**Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Inventory of  
Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 6

---



**Library open stacks**

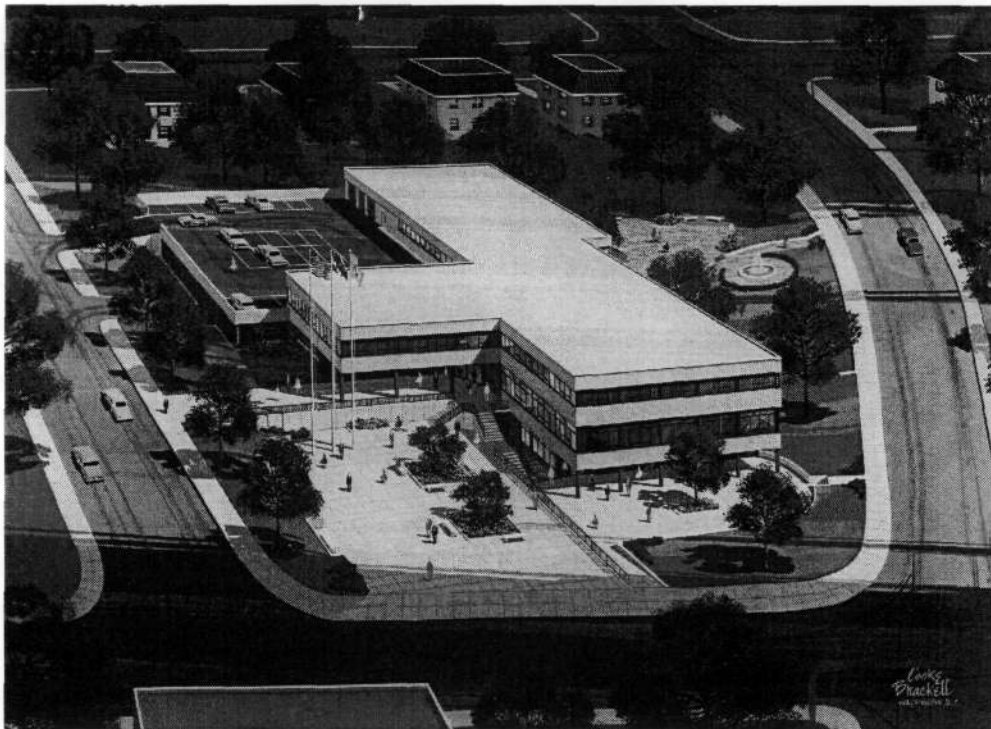
# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 7

---



Stanley Arthur's original design sketch for the Rockville Regional Library appeared in the *Montgomery County Sentinel*, January 31, 1969. The 2-level parking deck (upper left) was not built. Courtesy: Montgomery County Historical Society, *Sentinel* Newspaper collection.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. *M:26-47*

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates: 1971

Architect: Stanley H. Arthur, AIA

Construction dates: 1971

Builder: Gardner and Van Epp

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register☐ Maryland Register☐ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Rockville Regional Library was the City's first full-service public library, the culmination of a century-long odyssey to provide a permanent facility for library services and an emblem of Rockville's post-World War II emergence as major suburban center. Completed in 1971 and designated a regional library three years later, it is the only International Style library in Montgomery County and is among Rockville's most distinctive modernist buildings. Situated at the intersection of Jefferson Street and Maryland Avenue, the Rockville Regional Library catered to the needs of a rapidly growing suburban population. The library was a flagship facility that also served as the administrative headquarters for the Department of Public Libraries. When it closed in 2006, the Rockville Regional Library was recognized as having offered residents an accessible and diverse range of literary, educational, and research resources.

The 1971 dedication of the Rockville Library was - in effect - the culmination of a century-long odyssey to establish a permanent library facility in Rockville. This movement originated in 1869 with the founding of the Rockville Library Association of Montgomery County, which amassed a small collection of 150 books housed in the law offices of Anderson and Bouic on Montgomery Avenue.(2) This early initiative, however, failed to sustain momentum, and it was not until 1916 that Rockville women's groups organized a small lending library staffed by volunteers at the Woman's Club on Montgomery Avenue. By 1921, the Rockville Library Association had relocated its collection of 1,500 books and periodicals to Dr. Stonestreet's former medical offices and adopted articles of incorporation for a membership-based organization.(3) Under their leadership, the collection grew steadily, and by the late 1920s, the RLA was searching for more spacious quarters. In 1937, and with more than 5,000 books in circulation, the RLA leased space in the Rockville Academy (built 1890) at the corner of Adams and Jefferson Streets and hired its first paid librarian.(4) The library remained in the Rockville Academy building until 1966.

In 1948, the RLA reorganized as the Rockville Public Library and voted to offer free library service to all Rockville residents. Non-residents were charged an annual fee of \$3 per family. The following year, the Mayor and Council of Rockville allocated \$3,600 to assist the operation, a stipend which became a major source of revenue.(5)

The post-World War II population boom profoundly impacted Montgomery County, particularly Rockville which experienced a 276% increase in population between 1950 and 1960, compared with a 107% increase County wide.(6) The Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries was created in 1951, but Rockville opted not to join the new system

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

---

until 1957. Still operating in antiquated quarters at the Rockville Academy, the Library Board weighed its limited options for building an addition and expanding services to neighborhoods with bookmobiles or small branches.(7) Urban renewal of Rockville's downtown area in the mid-1960s offered the promise of a long-awaited permanent facility. In 1966, the library relocated to a stylish new office bank/office building at 255 North Washington Street designed by Arthur Anderson for the Suburban Trust Company. Conveniently situated near Town Center with shopping and ample parking, the library's 40,000 volume collection filled its temporary space as plans for a permanent facility were being formulated.(8)

By 1967, plans for new libraries in Aspen Hill, Chevy Chase, Kensington, and Wheaton were in varying stages of development. The regional library in Rockville and a Twinbrook branch were identified as priority capital projects, with \$800,000 earmarked in the budget for the Rockville facility. (9) Since the late 1950s, Rockville had been a preferred location for both a central library headquarters and a regional library, the latter a model for distributing reference and research collections in libraries at major population centers throughout the County.(10) Plans for a building to accommodate both administrative and regional library functions made site selection a critical process. Planning criteria emphasized accessibility to Rockville's urban center and convenient parking. According to Montgomery County Library Board records, three sites were considered, including 2 acres at Jefferson and Monroe Streets, a large parcel at the intersection of Interstate 70-S and Route 28, and a smaller 1.5-acre site opposite the County Office Building at the intersection of Jefferson and Perry Streets. The overwhelming preference was for the third site with its proximity to Rockville's urban renewal area and the promise of a new parking garage adjacent to the County Office Building.(11)

In June 1968, selection of the Jefferson and Perry Streets site was finalized. A prominent local property for 200 years, the site was lot 1 of the original "Plan of Rockville" (1803) and location of the Vinson house from 1860 to 1960. In 1961, the Boundary of Rockville or "B.R." stone, first marker of the 1803 survey, was moved onto the site from the middle of Perry Street. Prior to library construction, the property provided parking for nearby public facilities. A portion of the property on Jefferson Street was dedicated as "Vinson Park" in the 1980s and the setting for a memorial to the Rockville Volunteer Firefighters.

Stanley H. Arthur, a well-known Bethesda architect who designed the Davis Memorial Library in 1964, was named project architect for the new Rockville Library. In September, Arthur presented preliminary drawings and a scale model of his design to the Library Board, which gave its unanimous recommendation. Arthur's original plans included a two-level parking deck on Vinson Street, a feature that was eliminated in the final stages of the design process to reduce construction costs and to encourage use of the new County Office Building parking garage across Perry Street.(12) In addition to the plaza entryway, the Library plan included handicapped entrance ramp and elevator, audio-visual facilities, and a Children's Room. Construction on the 46,000 square foot building began in the spring of 1970. (13)

The Rockville Library was dedicated on September 10, 1971, with County Executive James Gleason, County Council President Idamae Garrett, Rockville Mayor Achilles Tuchtan, and Library Board members in attendance. The new facility, which was dedicated to George P. Moreland, the first director of County Library Services, officially opened to the public on September 11 and soon took its place as a long-awaited community resource.(14) Monthly reports from 1971 through 1973 prepared for the Library Board by Head Librarian Geraldine Wooldridge indicate steady, sometimes dramatic, increases in book circulation, library registrations, and acquisitions of new materials, including reference



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

---

resources and special collections. In her initial report on October 4, 1971, Wooldridge cited a circulation of more than 19,000 titles and a daily average of 61 library registrations, noting that the "physical size of the library and its unusually large holdings present an insurmountable problem for the present-size staff." (15) Despite an acute and on-going shortage of library staff, Wooldridge and her associates pursued an impressive outreach program to community groups, civic organizations, and County government and institutions, including public schools and Montgomery College. Committed to the idea of making the Rockville Library "a focus for community activity," staff members helped organize exhibits on Black History Month, works by members of the Rockville Arts League, and information programming on public safety, aging, and retirement. (16)

Early in 1972, Wooldridge reported that the Library "was a very exciting place to be," quoting one patron who observed that "she had never known ... libraries could be so lively." (17) But as new registrations and circulation statistics continued to increase, acquisitions of new materials created a backlog for overworked library personnel. Hampered by budgetary restraints, overworked staff reported complaints about library service and lack of parking space – the latter a perennial problem for the Rockville Library. By the spring of 1972, Wooldridge concluded that her staff "must make a concerted effort to educate the patron to help himself ... [by making] better use of the book catalog." (18) Despite problems with staff morale, the Library continued outreach to community groups and local institutions, including plans for the 1976 Bicentennial celebration and a cooperative program with the Montgomery County Historical Society for an official history of Montgomery County that resulted in the 1976 publication of Richard MacMaster and Raymond Hiebert's *In Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1776 – 1976*. (19)

Since the mid-1970s, the Department of Public Libraries has adapted to the Information and Computer Age, establishing a Telephone Reference Service in 1982, and subsequently providing electronic databases, computer stations, and Internet access in libraries, including Rockville, throughout Montgomery County. These initiatives have expanded and democratized public access to information and service technologies. Kristine N. Tuckerman, who worked at the Rockville Library from 1975 to 2006, reports an dramatic increase in the number of email inquiries, also noting that libraries provide an important public service to County residents and students who do not own or have access to computers. Tuckerman observes a dramatic shift in the number of non-English speaking patrons who depend on libraries for foreign language information on national, state, and community resources. (20)

The 1971 Rockville Library closed in 2006, following the completion of a new and larger facility three blocks north in Rockville Town Center. In its 35 years of operation, the Rockville Library provided County residents with service, information, opportunity, and access to a wider and rapidly changing world. It remains one of Rockville's best-known architectural landmarks.



# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 3

---

Stanley H. Arthur, A.I.A.:

Stanley Arthur (1912-1999) was a native of Louisville, Kentucky and a 1937 graduate of the University of Illinois. He served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II and practiced architecture in Louisville and Cleveland before coming to the Washington area in the late 1940s.(21) In 1951, Arthur established his own firm in Bethesda, which, by the 1960s, employed 3 architects, associates in mechanical, structural, and civil engineering, a landscape architect, and consultants in acoustics, lighting, interior design, art, and sculpture.(22) A prolific and versatile architect, Arthur designed numerous buildings throughout the Washington area, principally in Montgomery County. Clients included commercial and office developers, non-profit organizations, churches, and government agencies, notably the Montgomery County Board of Education for whom he designed more than 60 schools and educational facilities (Travilah Elementary School, 1960; Winston Churchill High School, 1966; Thomas W. Pyle High School, 1962, among others).(23) Arthur's firm completed a number of noteworthy office buildings including the Vaughan building (1956), the Chevy Chase Medical Building (1959), and the Bethesda Medical Building (1955), all still in use and relatively unaltered. Arthur's design for the Calvary Lutheran Church (1962) in Silver Spring was praised by *The Washington Post* for its striking modernist design. (24)

By the early 1970s, Arthur's firm had completed 5 major projects in Rockville including the IBM building (1959), Rockville Unitarian Church (1964), Rockville Civic Center Auditorium (1960), Southlawn Middle School (today Maryvale Elementary School, 1969), and Thomas S. Wootton High School (1970). Prior to the Rockville Library, he designed the Davis Memorial Library (1964) on Democracy Boulevard in Bethesda.

An active professional, Arthur served on the Maryland Architectural Registration Board (1963-1977) and he was a founder and president of the Potomac Valley Chapter of the Maryland American Institute of Architects (1960-1961). Following his retirement in 1978, Stanley Arthur exhibited and won prizes for his watercolor paintings, a pastime of his early career. (25) He died in 1999, leaving an impressive legacy of architectural achievement and professionalism.

Stanley Arthur was a master of the modernist idiom, which he skillfully adapted to a variety of building types, design contexts, and architectural scales and settings. Former associates describe his deep-seated commitment to the design process and architectural standards. His work demonstrates a fluency in a broad range of modern architectural styles and an insightful awareness of the stylistic implications of mid-century design. Arthur's school buildings, typically one or two stories, support bold horizontal rooflines and deep sheltering pavilions that define spatial relationships to site. Office buildings, composed of crisp geometric blocks, evoke the urban scale and character of the period. Calvary Lutheran Church, adjacent to the I-495 Beltway in Silver Spring, features a striking 78-foot chancel that forms a steep 25-degree angle, a combination that Arthur described as a "blend of the Gothic and the contemporary." (26)

Arthur's design for the Rockville Regional Library is a skillful synthesis of International Style architecture and site-related modernism. Designed late in Arthur's career, the Library demonstrates Arthur's mastery of modern technologies, form, and design principles. Although we are just beginning to document Arthur's impressive body of work, he contributed much to the architectural diversity and character of Rockville and Montgomery County.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

---

### Notes

1. William H. Jordy, "The American Acceptance of the International Style: George Howe & William Lescaze's Philadelphia Savings Fund Society Building," Chapter II in *American Builders and Their Architects: The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 87-163; *The Thames & Hudson Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture*, ed. Vittorio Magnano Lampugnani (London: Thames & Hudson, 1986), pp. 160-164; Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 241-245; Henry Russell-Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture Since 1922* (1932).
2. *Minutes of the Rockville Library Association, 1869 – 1876* [Montgomery County Archives]; Eileen S. McGuckian, *Rockville: Portrait of a City* (Franklin, Tennessee: Hillsboro Press, 2001), p. 83; Rockville Library Chronology prepared by Eileen McGuckian, November 2006. [Peerless Rockville Collection].
3. Constitution of the Rockville Library Association; History of the Rockville Library, 1871 – 1971 [Montgomery County Archives]; McGuckian, Rockville Library Chronology, 2006. [Peerless Rockville Collection].
4. McGuckian, *Portrait*, p. 107; Noma Thompson, *Western Gateway to the National Capital* (Washington, D.C.: Stewart Printing, 1950), pp. 49-50; *Montgomery County Sentinel*, November 4, 1937.
5. Minutes of Mayor and Council, June 29, 1949; former Mayor Alexander J. Greene, interview of 1985, pp. 42-43 [Peerless Rockville Collection]; McGuckian, *Portrait*, p. 143.
6. Richard K. MacMaster and Ray Eldon Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, 1776 – 1976* (Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery County Government and Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976), pp. 329-330; McGuckian, *Portrait*, pp. 129-136.
7. McGuckian, *Portrait*, pp. 143-144; former Mayor Dickran V. Hovsepien, interview of 1984 [Peerless Rockville Collection]; Bill McAda, "Rockville Library Relic of Past," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, October 18, 1962, B:1; B. Farquhar, "Methodist Church Buys Old Rockville Library," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, August 19, 1965, B:9.
8. History of Rockville Public Library, September 1980 [Montgomery County Archives]; Minutes of Montgomery County Library Board, August 11, 1966; Lease Agreement for Suburban Trust building, July 12, 1966 [Montgomery County Archives].
9. Minutes of Montgomery County Library Board, February 10, 1966; March 10, 1966; August 11, 1966; September 15, 1966; March 9, 1967; May 11, 1967. Note: The \$800,000 earmarked for the Rockville Library in the March 9, 1967 Minutes.
10. Montgomery County Library Board – Long-Range Planning Committee, Report on Facility Needs: 1956 – 1961, April 1856; Robert M. Bor, Chairman Montgomery County Library Board, to County Councilmember Idamae Garrett, July 25, 1969; Alan W. Trick, Chairman Montgomery County Library Board to County Councilmember David Cahoon, October 20, 1962. [Montgomery County Archives]. Note: Proximity to County government was frequently cited as a rationale for locating a major/regional branch in Rockville.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. M:26-47

Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5

---

11. Ibid., Trick to Cahoon; Fernallen A. Auxier, Chairman Montgomery County Library Board, to County Manager Mason A Butcher, July 20, 1967; Minutes, Montgomery County Library Board, September 14, 1967 and May 9, 1968 [Montgomery County Archives]; "Site for Regional Library Is Shifted in Renewal Area," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, June 10, 1968, A:2.
12. Minutes of the Montgomery County Library Board, June 13, 1968; September 19, 1968; "Library for Rockville," *Montgomery County Sentinel*, January 15, 1970, A:3.
13. The Montgomery County Archives has 1970 – 1971 photographs of site excavation and library construction.
14. Rockville Library Dedication Program, September 10, 1971; History of Rockville Public Library, September 1980. [Montgomery County Archives] Note: Moreland served as director of Library Services from 1951 to 1969.
15. Gerry [Geraldine] Wooldridge to Norman Finkler, Memorandum of October 4, 1971. [Montgomery County Archives]
16. Wooldridge to Finkler, Memoranda of October 4, 1971; November 2, 1971; December 4, 1971; January 5, 1972; February 5, 1972. [Montgomery County Archives]
17. Wooldridge to Finkler, Memorandum of March 2, 1972. [Montgomery County Archives]
18. Wooldridge to Finkler, Memorandum of May 30, 1972. [Montgomery County Archives]
19. Wooldridge to Finkler, Memoranda of November 6, 1972 and December 7, 1972. [Montgomery County Archives] Note: In 1976, Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Historical Society jointly published *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County Maryland, 1776 – 1976* written by Richard K. MacMaster and Ray Eldon Hiebert. In his foreword to the book, County Executive James Gleason credited the "County History Project" established by the Department of Public Libraries in 1973 for producing "a comprehensive body of historical knowledge about Montgomery County from a which a book could be written." MacMaster and Hiebert, *Grateful Remembrance*, pp. v-vi.
20. Kristine N. Tuckerman, interview of September 30, 2006, Rockville, Maryland.
21. Stanley H. Arthur, Architect, A.I.A.. Undated portfolio [Mary T. Arthur]; "Stanley Arthur Jr. Dies; Designed Area Buildings," *The Washington Post*, May 15, 1999, B:5; "Arthur, Stanley Houghton, A.I.A. 37," A.I.A. biographical entry. [American Institute of Architects Archives]
22. Stanley Arthur, undated portfolio.
23. "Bethesda's Busily Building Toward a Big Real Estate Future," *The Washington Post*, October 11, 1953, R:1; "Ocean Beach Housing Outlook," *The Washington Post*, September 5, 1954, R:2; "New Office Building for Bethesda," *The Washington Post*, July 17, 1955, G:1; "Bethesda Building Planned," *The Washington Post*, March 11, 1956, G:5; "New Maryland School," *The Washington Post*, March 16, 1957, B:2; "Chevy Chase Medical Building," *The Washington Post*, April 11, 1959, C:10; "New Home for Army Times," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 1955, G:18; "A Chancel Reaching Up to God," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1962, D:1; "Ground-Breaking for Unitarian Church," *The Washington Post*, January 4, 1964, C:10.
24. "Chancel," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1962; Jerold E. Williamson, interviews of September 13 and 21, 2006, Rockville, Maryland; David McClure, telephone interview of August 25, 2006.

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. M: 26-47

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 6

---

25. "Arthur," A.I.A. biographical entry; George M. Thompson, Assistant Chief, Building Technology Division, National Bureau of Standards. Letter of recommendation submitted on behalf of Stanley Arthur to the Maryland Board of Examiners and Registrars of Architects, April 7, 1949. [Peerless Rockville Collection]
26. "Chancel," *The Washington Post*, April 21, 1962.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. M: 26-47

1. Primary sources: Peerless Rockville Collection; Montgomery County Archives; Minutes of Mayor and Council; *Montgomery County Sentinel*; *The Washington Post*; interviews and oral histories; Stanley H. Arthur portfolio.
2. Secondary sources: McGuckian, Eileen S. *Rockville: Portrait of a City* (2001); MacMaster, Richard K. and Ray Eldon Hiebert. *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, 1776-1976* (1976).
3. Archival photograph courtesy Mary T. Arthur; library photographs courtesy Scott Robinson (September 2006).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1.5 acres  
Acreage of historical setting same  
Quadrangle name Rockville

Quadrangle scale: \_\_\_\_\_

### Verbal boundary description and justification

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title Teresa B. Lachin and Eileen S. McGuckian

organization Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation, Ltd.

date May 2007

street & number P.O. Box 4262

telephone 301-762-0096

city or town Rockville

state Maryland 20849

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



M: 26-47  
Rockville Regional Library  
99 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Md

